



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1329.0 - Australian Wine and Grape Industry, 2003

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Drought affects grape and wine production

Grapes harvested fell 15% to 1.497 million tonnes during the drought affected 2003 season, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The fall was the first decrease in grapes harvested since 1997, and was down from the record high in 2002 (1.754 million tonnes).

Drought conditions resulted in a fall in most grape-growing regions. The vintage 2003 grape crush of 1.399 million tonnes, fell 12.9% from the vintage 2002 record. Despite the fall, the grape crush was still the third highest on record.

The difficult seasonal conditions in 2002-03 had greater impact on white grapes. White grape crush fell 17.6% to 0.574 million tonnes and the red grape crush fell 9.3% to 0.825 million tonnes.

Beverage wine production fell by 11.4% to 1,059 million litres. The level of production was still the second highest ever, only exceeded by production from the record 2002 vintage.

Table beverage wine inventories increased by 0.7% to 1,582 million litres at 30 June 2003. This modest growth in inventories of wine follows increases ranging between 9.4% and 21.0% in the previous four years.

Domestic sales of wine maintained a steady growth in 2002-03, increasing 16.3 million litres (rise of 4.2%) to 402.5 million litres. Domestic sales of white table wine again surpassed the sales of red/rosé table wine capturing 58.5% of the domestic market.

Despite the production decrease, exports of Australian produced wine continued to grow in 2002-03. Exports reached 518.6 million litres in volume (24.0% rise since 2001-02) and was worth \$2,423.5 million in value.

In dry conditions, 84.4% of vineyards were irrigated. The most popular method of watering was by drip or microspray, with 71.4% of irrigated vines watered this way. Irrigated vineyards used an average of 3.9 megalitres of water per hectare for the 2003 vintage.

Further information is in **Australian Wine and Grape Industry, 2003** (cat. no. 1329.0).

Media Note: Information on the irrigation of vineyards has been released for the first time in **Australian Wine and Grape Industry, 2003** (cat. no. 1329.0).

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